of rental and air-time charge, which the subscriber may choose depending upon his/her usage pattern. Therefore, a single element of tariff such as air-time charge or rental, and its rate in an alternative package, viewed in isolation, does not give the true picture of the total tariff rate in given service area.

Further process has been started for inducting one more private operator of CMTS in most of the Service Areas, including Punjab Telecom Circle for which Letter of Intents were issued on 14.08.2001. After the introduction of additional operator, there will be two or three private operators and one Government operator in most of the Service Areas in the country. With increased competition due to multiple operators in each Service Area, it is expected that tariff will come down further.

Disinvestment of VSNL

3105. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have appointed a private agency named 'Sobhagya' to develop a communication strategy and handle the disinvestment of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd.;

(b) if so, the agreement made with the company;

(c) whether the employees of VSNL are on agitation against disinvestment of VSNL;

(d) if so, the views of the employees; and

(e) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Sobhagya Advertising Services, Mumbai, has been appointed in June, 2001 with a scope of work, *inter-alia,* including development of a communications strategy to address the concerns of various stakeholders ariising from the disinvestment process, ensuring effective communications of the highlights of VSNL and its value drivers to potential invetors *via* substantial positive news flow with a view to building up strong investor interest for the disinvestment etc.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The VSNL employees have held some demonstrations in support of there demands which *inter-alia* include job security and protection of service conditions, protection of existing wages, allowances and perks, continuation of pension, family pension and medical facilities to the retired and retiring employees, allotment on shares at par with no lock-in period, compensation to the Overseas Communication Services (OCS) employees with less than ten years at the time of absorption in VSNL before the transfer of management of VSNL takes place, waiver of the Income Tax charge on the inpounded retirement benefits of those absorbed in VSNL as the amount was impounded by the Government for seven years at the interest rate applicable to the General Provident Fund, retention of the existing full time Directors of VSNL and continuation of the constitutional guarantee applicable to the employees even after privatization.

(e) Government have held discussions, at various levels, which the representatives of the employees of VSNL. The genuine concerns connected with disinvestment would, as far as possible, be taken care of through the provisions of the Shareholders' Agreement.

Internal Audit of MTNL

†3106. SHRI MUNAVVAR HASAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the internal auditing of the income and expenditure of the corporate office of the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited is not carried out;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps Government are taking for carrying out internal auditing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) No, Sir. Internal audit of Cash and Accounts Sections of Corporate Office of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.